

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A method for grouping search results from a search for media on a
2 communications network, said media having at least one associated uniform
3 resource indicator (URI), each URI comprising at least one field, each field
4 comprising at least one character, said method comprising the steps of:

5 comparing each field in each URI associated with said media with a
6 mask, said mask comprising at least one masking character;

7 removing each character from each field that matches a masking
8 character, wherein a URI that has been compared with said mask is a resultant
9 URI; and

10 collapsing all identical resultant URIs into one URI.
- 1 2. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said at least one masking
2 character comprises a character indicating a bit rate of said media.
- 1 3. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising the step of
2 creating said mask.
- 1 4. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising the step of
2 sorting URIs into bins, wherein each bin comprises at least one URI, each URI
3 in a bin having at least one common specified field.
- 1 5. A method in accordance with claim 4, wherein said specified field
2 comprises contents indicating at least one of artist of said media, linking URI to
3 said media, title of said media, copyright date of said media, host URI of said
4 media, duration of said media, bit rate of said media, and sampling rate of said
5 media.

1 6. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein each field of each URI
2 comprises elements related to at least one of content of the media, intellectual
3 property rights associated with the media, and instantiation of the media.

1 7. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said media comprises at
2 least one multimedia and streaming media.

1 8. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said communications
2 network is a computer network.

1 9. A computer system for grouping search results from a search for media
2 on a computer network, said media having at least one associated uniform
3 resource indicator (URI), each URI comprising at least one field, each field
4 comprising at least one character, said computer system comprising at least one
5 computer, all computers in said system being communicatively coupled to each
6 other, wherein each of said at least one computer includes at least one program
7 stored therein for allowing communication between each and every of said at
8 least one computer, each of said at least one program operating in conjunction
9 with one another to cause said at least one computer to perform the steps of:

10 comparing each field in each URI associated with said media with a
11 mask, said mask comprising at least one masking character;

12 removing each character from each field that matches a masking
13 character, wherein a URI that has been compared with said mask is a resultant
14 URI; and

15 collapsing all identical resultant URIs into one URI.

1 10. A program readable medium having embodied thereon a program for
2 causing a processor to group search results from a search for media on a
3 communications network, said media having at least one associated uniform

resource indicator (URI), each URI comprising at least one field, each field comprising at least one character, said program readable medium comprising:

means for causing said processor to compare each field in each URI associated with said media with a mask, said mask comprising at least one masking character;

means for causing said processor to remove each character from each field that matches a masking character, wherein a URI that has been compared with said mask is a resultant URI; and

means for causing said processor to collapse all identical resultant URIs into one URI.

11. A data signal embodied in a carrier wave comprising:

a compare field code segment for comparing each field in at least one uniform resource indicator (URI) with a mask, said mask comprising at least one masking character, each of said at least one URI comprising at least one field, each field comprising at least one character, wherein said URI is a URI for media on a communications network;

a remove character code segment for removing each character from each field that matches a masking character, wherein a URI that has been compared with said mask is a resultant URI; and

a collapse URI code segment for collapsing all identical resultant URIs into one URI.

12. A data signal in accordance with claim 11, wherein said at least one masking character comprises a character indicating a bit rate of said media.

1 13. A data signal in accordance with claim 11 further comprising a create
2 mask code segment for creating said mask.

1 14. A data signal in accordance with claim 11 further comprising a sort URI
2 code segment for sorting URIs into bins, wherein each bin comprises at least
3 one URI, each URI in a bin having at least one common specified field.

1 15. A data signal in accordance with claim 14 wherein said specified field
2 comprises contents indicating at least one of artist of said media, linking URI to
3 said media, title of said media, copyright date of said media, host URI of said
4 media, duration of said media, bit rate of said media, and sampling rate of said
5 media.

1 16. A data signal in accordance with claim 11, wherein each field of each
2 URI comprises elements related to at least one of content of said media,
3 intellectual property rights associated with said media, and instantiation of said
4 media.

1 17. A method for grouping search results from a search for at least one of
2 multimedia and streaming media on a communications network, said at least
3 one of multimedia and streaming media having at least one associated uniform
4 resource indicator (URI), each URI comprising at least one field, each field
5 comprising at least one character, said method comprising the steps of:

6 sorting URIs into bins, each bin comprising at least one URI, each URI
7 in a bin having at least one common specified field, wherein said specified field
8 comprises content indicating at least one of artist of said at least one of
9 multimedia and streaming media, linking URI to said at least one of
10 multimedia and streaming media, title of said at least one of multimedia and
11 streaming media, copyright date of said at least one of multimedia and
12 streaming media, host URI of said at least one of multimedia and streaming

13 media, duration of said at least one of multimedia and streaming media, bit rate
14 of said at least one of multimedia and streaming media, and sampling rate of
15 said at least one of multimedia and streaming media;

16 comparing each field in each URI associated with said at least one of
17 multimedia and streaming media with a mask, said mask comprising at least
18 one masking character, wherein said at least one masking character comprises a
19 character indicating a bit rate of said at least one of multimedia and streaming
20 media;

21 removing each character from each field that matches a masking
22 character, wherein a URI that has been compared with said mask is a resultant
23 URI; and

24 collapsing all identical resultant URIs into one URI.

1 18. A method in accordance with claim 17, wherein said communications
2 network is a computer network.